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## EDITOR'S MISCELLANY



THE NEW YORK MEDICAL RECORD of February 17th, in commenting on the death of Sir Joseph Lister, which occurred at his home in London, at the age of eighty-four years, says:

"It was while he was professor at the University of Glasgow that Lister devised his system of anti-septic surgery, to which he was led by a study of Pasteur's work on fermentation and putrefaction. He applied to animal tissues the principles enunciated by Pasteur in the case of plant derivatives; he showed that inflammation and suppuration were of the same nature as fermentation and putrefaction, and reasoned that, as fermentation could be avoided by preventing the access of germs so might inflammation and suppuration be avoided by the same means. The various steps by which this object was obtained and the gradual evolution of the present day asepsis from the original antiseptic surgery with its carbolic spray have been followed by many surgeons not yet old, and are known to all, yet it requires an effort, even for those who have lived the history of the development of aseptic surgery, to picture the difference between the modern surgical ward and that of less than forty years ago. Who knows to-day of hospital gangrene? Who sees the strong man brought to death's door by the drain of prolonged suppuration from an operation wound, which heals now with barely a drop of moisture on the dressings? Who remembers the time when to open a knee-joint was to commit murder, or to cut into the abdominal cavity required more courage than most surgeons, even the most intrepid, could boast of? Yet such things were within the lifetime of many now living, and they have been relegated to the limbo of the spinning wheel, the stage coach, and the flintlock pistol by the genius of Joseph Lister.

"Many years ago, on the occasion of a celebration at which Lister was honored by a great assembly, the American Ambassador, Mr. Bayard, said: 'My Lord, it is not a profession, not a nation, it is humanity itself which, with uncovered head, salutes you.' So now, it is not medicine, not Great Britain, but the world which mourns not his death, for he himself welcomed it, but gives thanks for his life and for the immense boon he conferred on mankind."